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PREFACE

The present double volume contains articles based on talks given at the International Conference *Combinatorics 96* which took place at the Conference center La Cittadella in Assisi (Perugia, Italy) from 8 to 14 September 1996.

This Conference has been held in memory of the late Prof. Giuseppe Tallini who, with a pioneering work, stimulated research in combinatorial geometry all over the world. Together with Adriano Barlotti he has made the major contributions to the development of the Italian school of geometrical combinatorics founded by Beniamino Segre. Obituaries of Giuseppe Tallini are published in *J. Geom.* 57 (1996) 3–8, *Designs Codes Cryptography* 9 (1966) 237–245, and in *Boll. Un. Mat. Ital.*; cf. also the issue *Giuseppe Tallini: his work and our reminiscences*, Università degli Studi di Perugia 1996.

There were 230 participants from 25 countries to review the scientific achievements over the last few years and to set goals for the future in all fields of combinatorial ranging from pure mathematics to applied mathematics.

Twenty speakers were invited to give 45-min Plenary Addresses. Also, 13 speakers were invited to give 40-min Section Lectures. Finally, there were 96 short communications.

The Organizing Committee is grateful for the financial support of the Università degli Studi di Perugia, of the Dipartimento di Matematica dell'Università di Perugia, of the Unione Matematica Italiana, of the Gruppo Nazionale per le Strutture Algebriche, Geometriche e per le loro Applicazioni and of the Comitato per la Matematica del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche.

Let me also add that the general atmosphere of the Congress has been very friendly and this has allowed us to concentrate on purely mathematical problems.

I thank A. Basile, C. Bernasconi, F. Brenti, P. Brutti, F. Conti, M. Giulietti, F. Pambianco, G. Pellegrino, E. Ughi and R. Vincenti for the hard work to organize the Conference. I am highly indebted to my Scientific Committee colleagues A. Barlotti, P.V. Ceccherini, G. Korchmáros and M. Scafati Tallini for their excellent job. I would like to thank the speakers for their admirable efforts. On behalf of the Scientific Committee I would also like to express my warmest thanks to the referees for their invaluable assistance.

Giorgio Faina

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